What Do My PSAT Scores Mean?

(and what about this alphabet soup?)



Woodlands Test Prep

When will I receive my PSAT Scores?

If your school submitted tests by…	Your scores are available on…
October 9, 2026	October 22, 2026
October 23, 2026	November 5, 2026
October 30, 2026	November 12, 2026

Your school decides when to submit its tests, so ask your counselor which date applies.
Scores appear in your College Board account, and in the BigFuture School app if you gave a mobile number at testing.

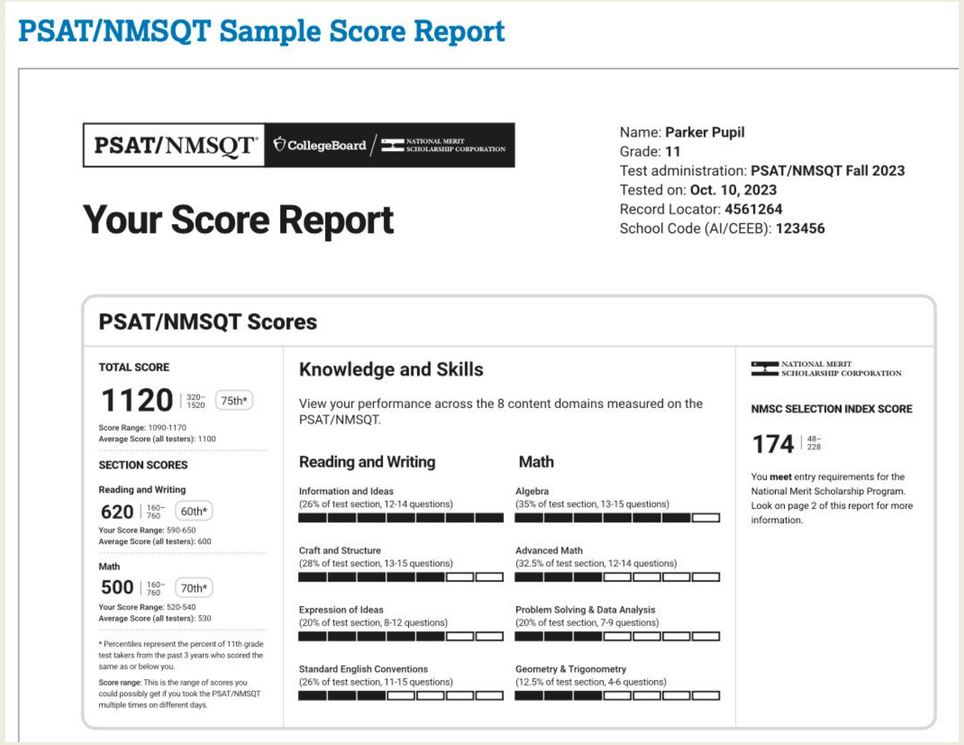
What Do My PSAT Scores Mean?

- ★PSAT Score Report – What do these numbers mean?
- ★What is National Merit?
- ★SAT vs. ACT – Which one should I take? When?
- ★What is the Digital Adaptive SAT?
- ★How do I get ready for these tests?

PSAT Score Report

Two Versions

PDF from your counselor
(click for College Board booklet)



PSAT/NMSQT Sample Score Report

PSAT/NMSQT | CollegeBoard / NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP CORPORATION

Your Score Report

Name: **Parker Pupil**
Grade: **11**
Test administration: **PSAT/NMSQT Fall 2023**
Tested on: **Oct. 10, 2023**
Record Locator: **4561264**
School Code (AI/CEEB): **123456**

PSAT/NMSQT Scores

TOTAL SCORE
1120 | 320–1520 | 75th*
Score Range: 1090-1170
Average Score (all testers): 1100

SECTION SCORES

Reading and Writing
620 | 160–760 | 60th*
Your Score Range: 590-650
Average Score (all testers): 600

Math
500 | 160–760 | 70th*
Your Score Range: 520-540
Average Score (all testers): 530

* Percentiles represent the percent of 11th grade test takers from the past 3 years who scored the same as or below you.
Score range: This is the range of scores you could possibly get if you took the PSAT/NMSQT multiple times on different days.

Knowledge and Skills

View your performance across the 8 content domains measured on the PSAT/NMSQT.

Reading and Writing

Information and Ideas
(26% of test section, 12-14 questions)

Craft and Structure
(28% of test section, 13-15 questions)

Expression of Ideas
(20% of test section, 8-12 questions)

Standard English Conventions
(26% of test section, 11-15 questions)

Math

Algebra
(35% of test section, 13-15 questions)

Advanced Math
(32.5% of test section, 12-14 questions)

Problem Solving & Data Analysis
(20% of test section, 7-9 questions)

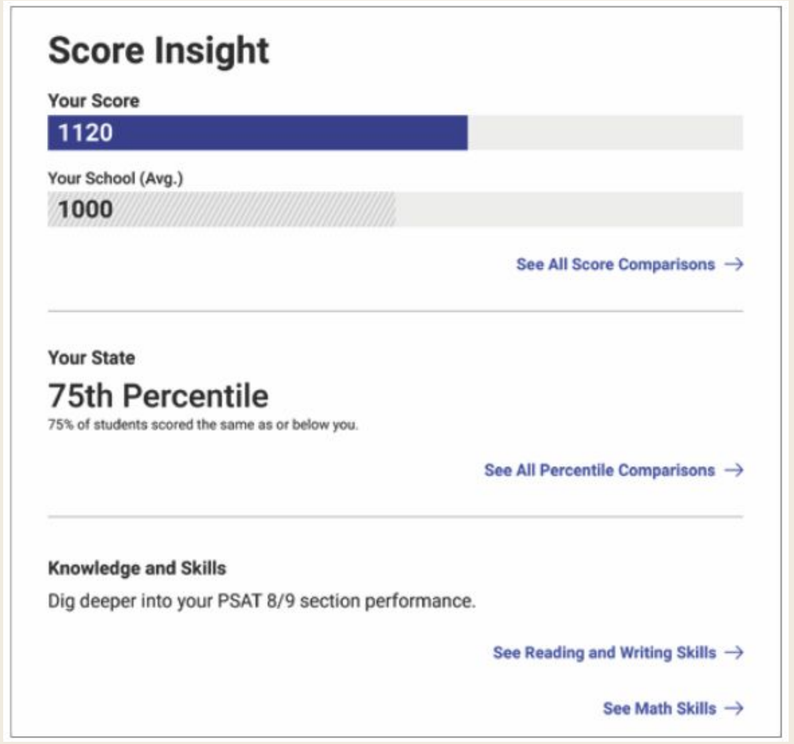
Geometry & Trigonometry
(12.5% of test section, 4-6 questions)

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP CORPORATION

NMSC SELECTION INDEX SCORE
174 | 48–228

You **meet** entry requirements for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Look on page 2 of this report for more information.

Log into Big Future app or College Board website



Score Insight

Your Score
1120

Your School (Avg.)
1000

See All Score Comparisons →

Your State
75th Percentile
75% of students scored the same as or below you.

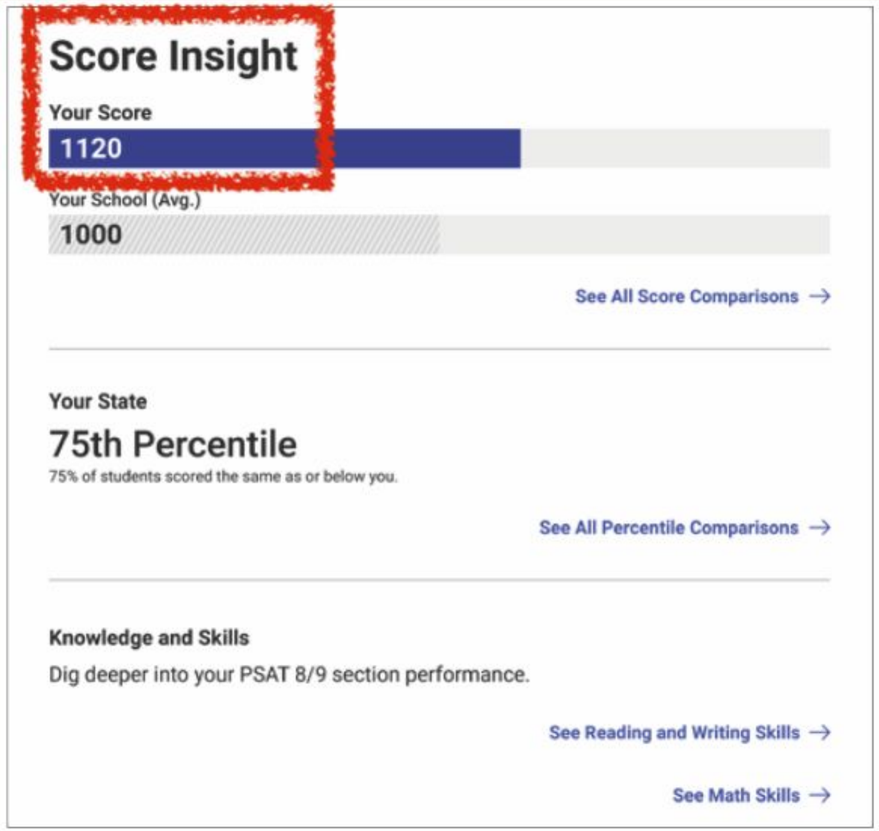
See All Percentile Comparisons →

Knowledge and Skills
Dig deeper into your PSAT 8/9 section performance.

See Reading and Writing Skills →

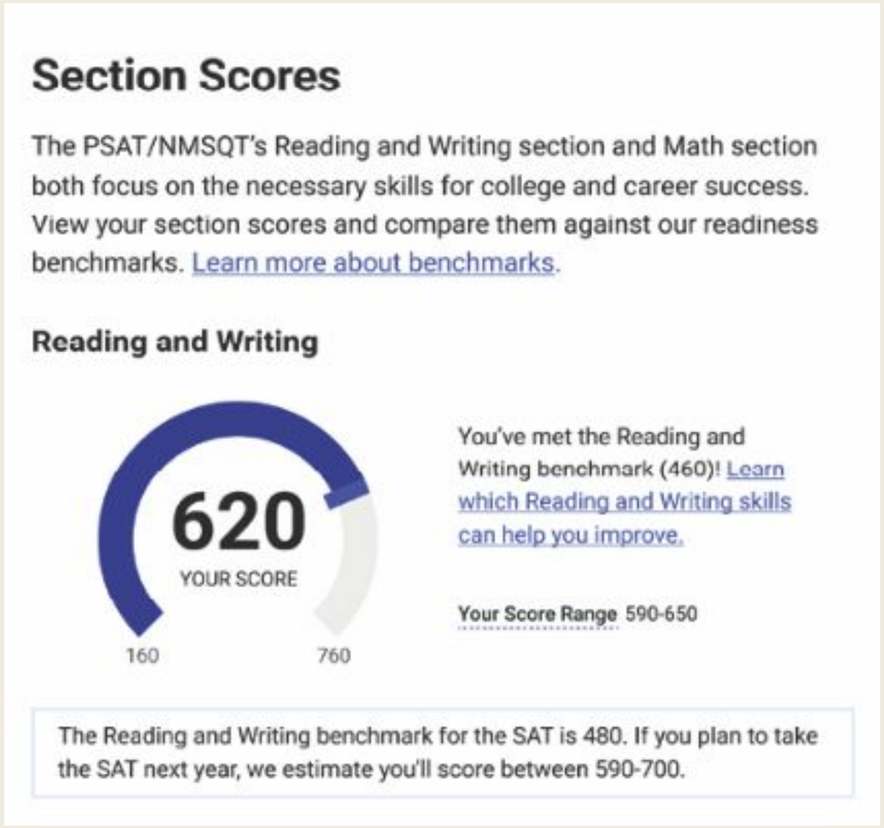
See Math Skills →

PSAT Score Report



Total Score
on a scale of
320 – 1520

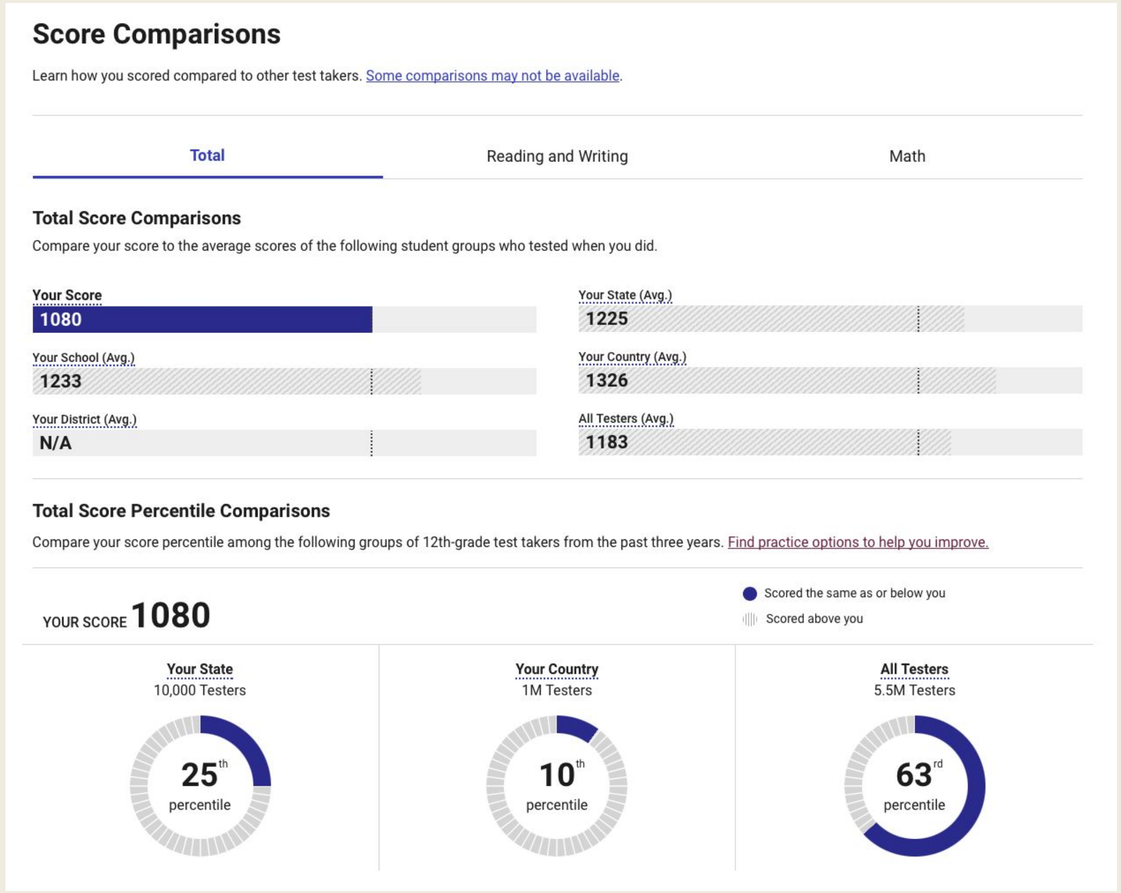
PSAT Score Report



Verbal	Math
Scale: 160 - 760	Scale: 160 - 760
Combines results from both Verbal modules	Combines results from both Math modules

PSAT Score Report

Log into Big Future app or College Board website



Score Comparisons

Learn how you scored compared to other test takers. Some comparisons may not be available.

Total | Reading and Writing | Math

Total Score Comparisons

Compare your score to the average scores of the following student groups who tested when you did.

Your Score: 1080	Your State (Avg.): 1225
Your School (Avg.): 1233	Your Country (Avg.): 1326
Your District (Avg.): N/A	All Testers (Avg.): 1183

Total Score Percentile Comparisons

Compare your score percentile among the following groups of 12th-grade test takers from the past three years. Find practice options to help you improve.

YOUR SCORE 1080

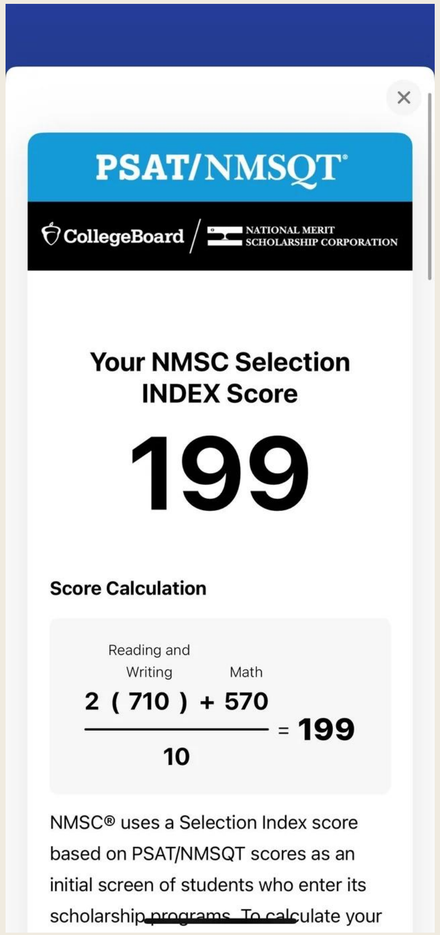
Scored the same as or below you
Scored above you

Your State	Your Country	All Testers
10,000 Testers	1M Testers	5.5M Testers
25th percentile	10th percentile	63rd percentile

Score Comparisons

- Compared to graduating cohort
- Ranks include:
  - Country
  - State
  - All testers

PSAT Score Report



National Merit Selection Index

$$\frac{(2 \times \text{Verbal}) + \text{Math}}{10} = \text{Selection Index}$$

Example:

Verbal: 620

Math: 500

$$\frac{(620 \times 2) + 500}{10} = 174$$

PSAT Score Report

For students in National Merit Commended or Semifinalist range, the qualifying selection index scores from Class of 2027 for Texas were:

- Commended – 208 (set on a national basis)
  - Range over last 5 years: 207 - 210
- Semifinalist – 219 (set on a state-by-state basis)
  - Range over last 5 years: 219 - 222

National Merit Process

- Junior year PSAT is the official test for entry
- First step in the process
- About 1.4 million students take the PSAT/NMSQT junior year

Click here for in-depth information on the National Merit Scholarship program and the process for becoming a National Merit Scholar.

OCTOBER - JUNIOR YEAR
Take PSAT for entry

APRIL - JUNIOR YEAR
Commended scores become public

SEPTEMBER - SENIOR YEAR
Semifinalists notified & advance

OCTOBER - SENIOR YEAR
Commended students notified

FEBRUARY - SENIOR YEAR
Finalists notified

MARCH - SENIOR YEAR
Scholarships begin to be awarded

How to prepare for National Merit

- Remember that cutoff scores are VERY high in Texas
- Dedication to practice is important
- Ideally, start during or right after sophomore year
- Focus serious prep and practice during summer between sophomore and junior years

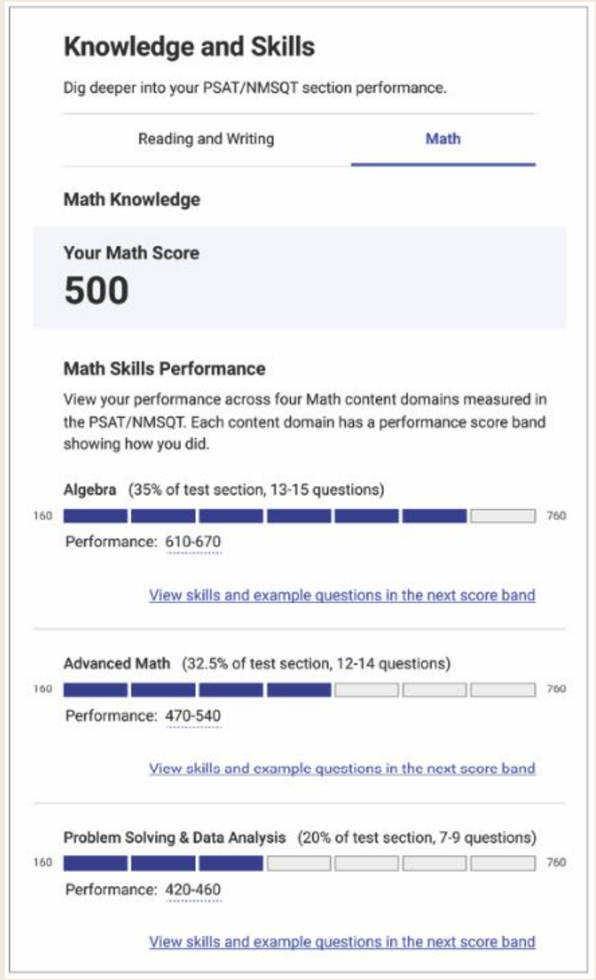
PSAT Score Reporting

- PSAT scores are NOT reported to colleges. For most students, they only serve as a great resource to indicate what areas need work for the SAT.

- The test is aimed at 11th graders, particularly in math. The math test is heavily focused on algebra up through Algebra II. Ninth and 10th graders need to remember that they will cover that material in time.

- Students' scores on spring SATs go up more often than down. Relatively lower SAT scores show larger gains.

Practice Feedback



Knowledge and Skills

Dig deeper into your PSAT/NMSQT section performance.

Reading and Writing | Math

Math Knowledge

Your Math Score

500

Math Skills Performance

View your performance across four Math content domains measured in the PSAT/NMSQT. Each content domain has a performance score band showing how you did.

Algebra (35% of test section, 13-15 questions)

160 — 760

Performance: 610-670

View skills and example questions in the next score band

Advanced Math (32.5% of test section, 12-14 questions)

160 — 760

Performance: 470-540

View skills and example questions in the next score band

Problem Solving & Data Analysis (20% of test section, 7-9 questions)

160 — 760

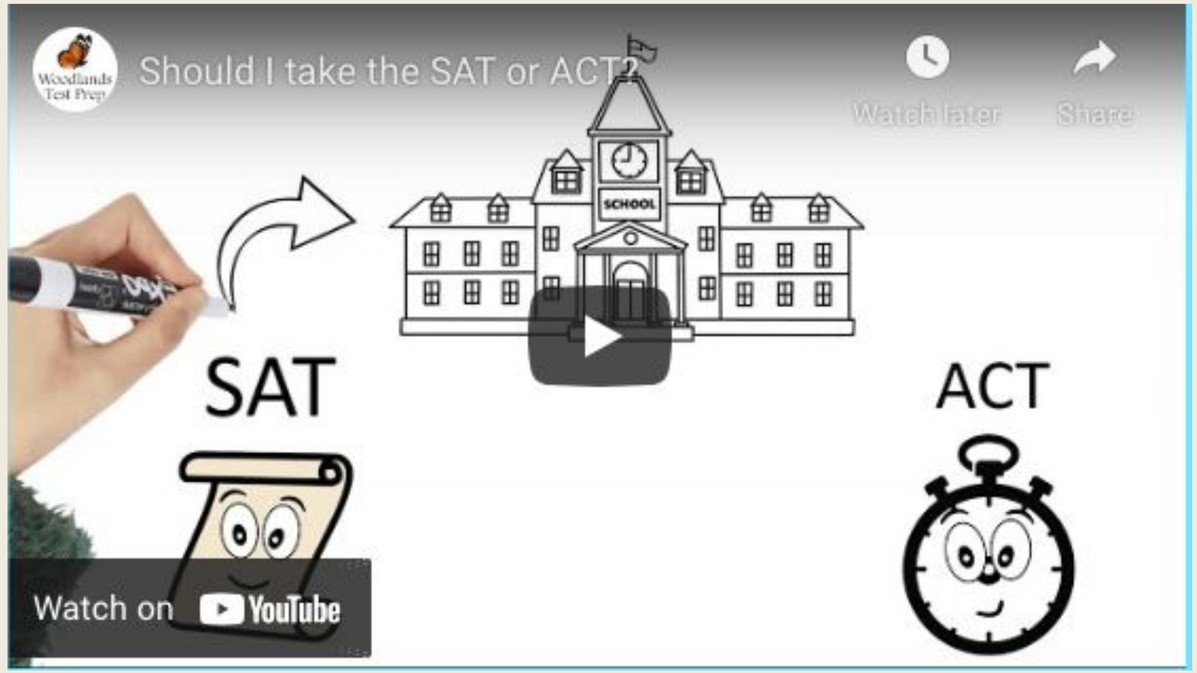
Performance: 420-460

View skills and example questions in the next score band

- Log in to the student's College Board account to access more resources
- Each content area gives a band of performance. Evaluate which were stronger/weaker
- Click through to Skills Insight questions for examples at the same difficulty level

SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

- All colleges accept either test. You have choices!
- You can choose to focus on only one test.
- Each test has a "personality."
- Each student's processing style, strengths, and weaknesses create preferences for one test or the other.



Woodlands Test Prep

SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

SAT



- Exact same format as PSAT
- Much more time per question; less overall testing time
- No long passages!
- Focused math: almost all algebra plus some data analysis and geometry
- Desmos calculator available on all math questions
- More complex wording and vocabulary

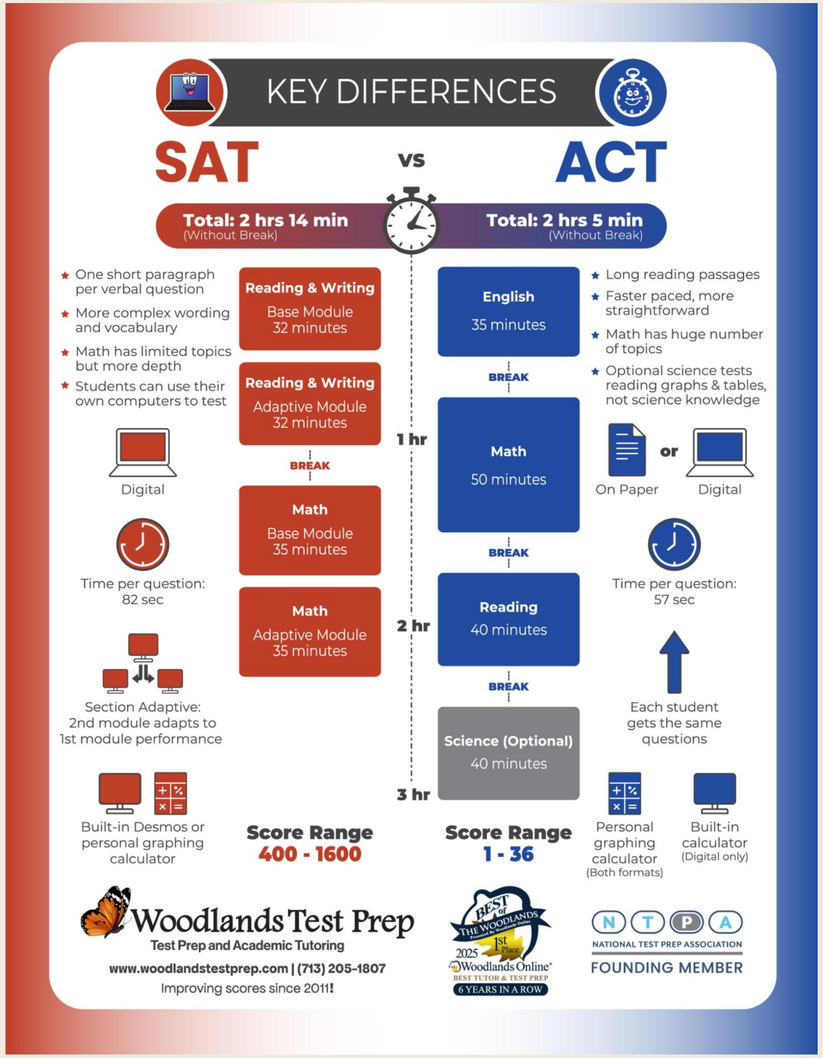
ACT

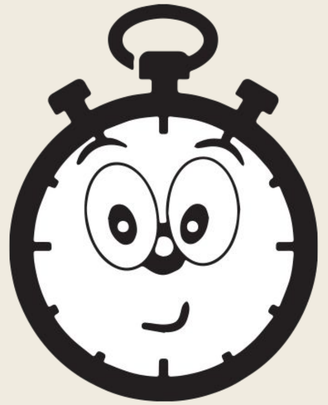


- 4 sections: English, Math, Reading, Science (Science is optional)
- Much faster paced; similar overall testing time
- Straightforward; easier reading level overall
- Math covers broad range of topics – there's more geometry!
- Science section is reading graphs and tables

SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?







Format differences - Details

	 Digital Adaptive SAT	ACT 
Testing method	Onscreen / Own device	On paper / Ignore digital option
Overall Time	2 hours 14 minutes	2 hours 5 minutes (2 hours 45 minutes with Science)
Time per Question	Average 82 sec.	Average 57 sec.
Scoring Method	Adaptive: Number right on baseline section indicates which second section; experimental items embedded; some questions have more weight	Each question worth one point; raw score correlates with scaled score; experimental items mixed in
Accommodations	Most handled through the computer: extra time, etc.; paper versions available rarely	Handled in the traditional way
Calculator Use	Allowed on all math sections; built-in Desmos calculator	Bring your own; TI-Nspire CAS not allowed
Score Receipt	13 days	10 - 17 days

Content differences - Details

	 Digital Adaptive SAT	ACT 
Reading	No long passages; single paragraph per question; heavy emphasis on more difficult vocabulary; poetry and old texts	Traditional format: 4 passages, each with 9 questions; straightforward wording
Writing	Basic grammar and writing mechanics; single paragraph per question.	5 passages, most with 10 questions. Mix of grammar and rhetorical questions.
Math	Approximately 70% Algebra, 15% Data Representation; 15% Geometry; some formulas provided	Smorgasbord of all math learned since middle school; 25% Geometry; no formulas provided
Science	NA	Reading comprehension of charts and tables; very limited science knowledge

SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

- To decide which one is better, compare ACT score with either SAT score (best) or PSAT score (good).

- Take a full-length official practice test at home to get a baseline score. We can provide one for free! No need to take on the record!

- Compare scores using Concordance tables (ACT vs. SAT).

When should I take the SAT/ACT?

Things to Consider

- Math level – Both tests cover Algebra II. Fall testing is ok if the student has already taken Algebra II. Spring testing is recommended if taking Algebra II in 11th grade.
- AP classes - SAT May date is right before AP testing begins.
- Extra-curricular activities – When is crunch time? When can extra prep time be absorbed?
- Early decision / admission deadlines – For senior year, how many test dates will be available for re-taking the target test?
- Remember – Most students take their chosen test at least twice and often three times. Make sure to allow time.

Testing Calendar

(click above for downloadable version)



SAT Test Dates 2026 - 2027
August 22, 2026
September 12, 2026
October 3, 2026
November 7, 2026
December 5, 2026
March 6, 2027
May 1, 2027
June 5, 2027

ACT Test Dates 2026 - 2027
September 19, 2026
October 17, 2026*
December 12, 2026*
February 27, 2027
April 10, 2027*
June 12, 2027*
July 10, 2027



Test Prep “Pro Tips”

- ★ Consider how the student learns best and his or her realistic motivation level
  - In a group or class
  - One on one tutoring
  - Independently – books or videos
- ★ Prep before taking a test “on the record”
- ★ If ACT, try to take the first time when the test booklet (actual questions) is available; look for “starred” dates on our calendars.

Test Prep “Pro Tips”

★ We’re happy to help you think through your testing plan.

★ Fill out the Contact us form for a free consultation! Or call us at 713-205-1807 or email us at success@woodlandstestprep.com.